

Guidelines for writing protocols for the website: Hand-raising, rehabilitation and release guidelines; Care sheets and husbandry manuals

Rehabilitators who wish to publish protocols on Rehabber's Den can refer to the points below. These simplistic guidelines are to help you get started on your protocols. As you make progress on your draft, you may find the need to modify the structure to suit the needs of the protocol.

Please feel free to contact us if you require help or guidance.

Basic structure of the protocol

1. Introduction to the species
2. The need to rescue
3. Emergency care
4. Housing: neonate & adult
5. Hand-raising protocols: special care, hygiene, feed formula, diet charts, weaning, growth & development
6. Rehabilitation techniques: needs, behavior, feeding and environmental enrichment, creating independence
7. Any special behaviors, needs or notes
8. Release guidelines: techniques, timing, maximizing survival
9. Breeding tips/ Conservation breeding – if relevant
10. Post-release monitoring, where possible
11. Acknowledgements
12. Resources used.

Tips for putting together a protocol

It is essential to keep in the mind each species' unique biology while penning down care and rehabilitation protocols. Each species, having specialized over millennia to fit into a certain niche, often has its own unique requirements. The more specialized the niche is the more specific will be its requirements in terms of care and rehabilitation. This is the main reason it takes longer to perfect protocols for animals occupying a specialized niche.

It is always a good practice to start the protocol with an introduction to the species. This not only forewarns you in terms of its requirements but also channels your thoughts to the biology of the animal.

Most individual animals have their own special preferences. Some may even differ immensely from the species in general. This must be remembered while drafting protocols for a species as what may be based on the experience of a particular individual may not be applicable for the entire species as a whole. Protocols must therefore only be drafted for the average expectation or requirement of the species as a whole after your experience with a few individuals of the species.

Reference datasheets

The single-most important resource for drafting a protocol is the availability of meticulously written datasheets. These datasheets must have detailed record of diets, feed quantities and timings, behaviors observed, veterinary care, etc. The datasheets must also contain detailed descriptions of not only what worked or affected an individual positively but also things or instances that have negatively affected an individual and must be avoided at all times. Research your datasheets – this will form the main source of content for your protocol.

Guidelines for writing protocols for the website

Photographs

The adage, 'a picture is worth a thousand words' says it all. Photographs will not only add volume to your protocols but also help in communicating your thoughts effectively. "No verbal description can equate the photograph of a baby animal being fed in the right manner!" Ensure to take photographs at every available opportunity, without disturbing the animals of course. If none available, you can request for photographs from other people – with the appropriate credit given for every photograph.

The Golden Rule

Only publish what you know for sure based on your own experiences. Do not publish a hypothesis. We are interested in publishing established guidelines that have worked successfully for the species.

Publications on Rehabber's Den

All protocols sent to us will be published after they have been assessed and edited by fellow rehabilitators and biologists. At Rehabber's Den, we acknowledge your efforts and all your articles, photographs, etc. will be published in your name.

We only welcome genuine and established protocols based on your experience. To authenticate your guidelines and literature, please provide a list of references for the same. If you are writing the protocols in combination with someone else's experiences, we would expect you to acknowledge their contribution.